

**Appl. No.** : 09/377,322  
**Filed** : August 19, 1999

A<sup>1</sup>  
the attention of other programmers, including other programmers at Microsoft™ Corporation. Even where such products are known to the user, the user's ignorance of a product's level of acceptance within specific communities, and/or the user's inability to communicate with users who are familiar with the product, can contribute to a poor purchase decision.--

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 3, with the following:**

A<sup>2</sup>  
--The Community Interests services operate generally by tracking purchases of books within particular user communities, and using this information to assist potential customers in locating and evaluating book titles. The services can also be used with other types of products. The communities preferably include both "explicit membership communities" that users actively join, and "implicit membership communities" that are computed or otherwise identified from information known about the user (e.g., stored in the user database). Examples of implicit membership communities include domain-based communities such as *Microsoft.com Users* and geographic region base communities such as *New Orleans Area Residents*; memberships to these two types of communities may be determined from user email addresses and shipping addresses, respectively.--

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 8, with the following:**

A<sup>3</sup>  
--When the user selects the submit button 46, the user may be asked certain questions that pertain to the selected communities, such as university graduation dates and majors. The user may also be prompted to enter authentication information that is specific to one or more of the selected communities. For example, the user may be asked to enter a community password (even if the community is not private), or may be asked a question that all members of the group are able to answer. A community may also have a designated "group administrator" that has the authority to remove unauthorized and disruptive users from the group.--

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 15, line 21, with the following:**

A<sup>4</sup>  
--Figure 5 illustrates a set of Web site system components that may be used to implement the above-described features. The Web site system includes a Web server 76 which accesses a database 78 of HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) and related content. The HTML database 78

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contains, among other things, the basic HTML documents used to generate the personalized sign-up, community bestsellers, and product detail pages of Figures 1-3. The Web server 76 accesses service code 80, which in-turn accesses a user database 82, a community database 84, a bibliographic database of product data (not shown), and a database or other repository of community data 86. The various databases are shown separately in Figure 5 for purposes of illustration, but may in practice be combined within one or more larger database systems. The service code 80 and other executable components may, for example, run on one or more Unix or Windows NT based servers and/or workstations.--

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 21, line 4 with the following:**

AS  
--The next step 124 involves generating the bestseller lists for each of the selected communities. This process is illustrated by Figure 7B and is described below. In step 126, the process identifies any communities that are related to the user's base communities, so that these related communities can be displayed within or at the top of the drop-down list 50 (Figure 2). Any composite community which includes one of the user's base communities may automatically be included in this list. In addition, information stored in the community database 84 may be used to identify related base communities. In other implementations, this step 126 may be omitted. Finally, in step 128, the bestseller lists and the list of related communities are incorporated into the community bestsellers page.--

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 22, line 13 with the following:**

AL  
--Figure 8 illustrates the steps that are performed by the product detail page process 80C to generate detail pages (as in Figure 3) for participants in the Contact Information Exchange program. As indicated above, product detail pages can be accessed using any of the site's navigation methods, such as conducting a search for a title. In step 150, a list of the base communities of which the user is a member is obtained — either from a browser cookie or from the user database 82. In step 152, for each base community in this list, that community's product-to-member mapping table 86B (Figure 5) is accessed to identify any other users within the community that have purchased the product. In step 154, the contact information for each such user is read from the table 86B or from the user database 82. In step 156, the contact information and associated base

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A<sup>6</sup> community names are incorporated into the product's detail page. As indicated above, an option may additionally or alternatively be provided for the requester of the page to chat with any such other users that are currently online.--

**Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 24, line 19 with the following:**

A<sup>7</sup> --The various community-related features described above can also be implemented in the context of a network-based personal information management system. One such system is implemented through the Web site of PlanetAll (www.planetall.com). Using this system, users can join various online communities and can selectively add members of such communities to a virtual, personal address book. In addition, each user can selectively expose his or her own personal information to other community members on a user-by-user and datum-by-datum basis. Additional details of this system are described in U.S. appl. no. 08/962,997 titled NETWORKED PERSONAL CONTACT MANAGER filed November 2, 1997 (now U.S. Patent No. 6,269,369), the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference.--

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

**Please amend Claims 1, 5, 12, 13 and 18 as follows:**

1. (Amended) A method of assisting users in evaluating items of an electronic catalog of items, the catalog accessible to users of an online store that provides services for allowing users to purchase items from the catalog, the method comprising the computer-implemented steps of:

identifying an item to be displayed to a first user;

identifying a second user that both (a) has purchased the item and (b) is a member of a community associated with the first user, said community representing a subset of a general user population; and

in response to identifying the second user, electronically notifying the first user that the item has been purchased by the second user, and providing contact information of the second user to the first user to allow the first user to communicate with the second user about the item.